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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

JUDGE WILLIAM WEBSTER'S SPEECH

EVENING TRIBUTE

WHW GALA

June 11, 1987

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

JUDGE WEBSTER: Thank you very much. I am really overwhelmed. I'm overwhelmed by the friends I have seen tonight who have come out here, overwhelmed by what has been said, overwhelmed by the memories that the film brought back of these past nine years.

John, I thank you for the vote of confidence. You know how much I respect and admire you and all the agents who have really done the work these past nine years.

Attorney General Meese, I am honored that you would come out tonight. I am grateful for what you had to say. From the very first day President Reagan was elected, before he had even come to office, Ed Meese supported the non-political role of the Bureau and its director. He has been a great friend of law enforcement. And that is well known to all of you. He is a warm and compassionate friend to many of us in this room and I am grateful to Ursula and to Ed for the genuineness of their friendship. I could not be more pleased that he was asked to speak tonight.

Well, I'm in between, I guess. Two weeks ago I assumed new responsibilities. Due to the confirmation process and the inability to forecast when, or if, the Senate would

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agree that I should take the new job, I think they had to forecast when this dinner was going to be. Consequently, I am not sure whether I am in the role of ghost of Christmas past, ghost of Christmas present, or one yet to come. But I have gone through an interesting rite of passage and one that, I guess, has been good for the humility. We have an old song we like to sing around here about how it is hard to be humble. Going through confirmation it is not at all hard to be humble.

Along the way I thought about some early lessons in humility that come to me, and if you'll let me share them with you, they bring back some warm memories.

You saw the badge Attorney General Griffin Bell gave me at the opening ceremony. I made a promise to keep it bright and shiney. So immediately afterwards I got back to my office and I asked Peggy Devine to put it in a lucite case, so it would stay bright and shiney.

(Laughter.)

But Jim Adams, the associate director, said, "You can't do that, we are going to give you a leather container and you have to carry it with you." I said, "I don't know that I should do that, I've got to produce this ten years

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from now." And I said, "Why do you want me to that?" And he said, "Because you are going to be out making speeches and appearances, and at meetings, and you are going to meet little children. And if you don't have that badge, they are not going to believe your are director of the FBI."

(Laughter.)

So, I carried that badge, having that in mind.

One weekend I was invited down to the Tidewater area by my friend George Freeman, who is seated with Ann in the front here, and later, after a tennis game, we stayed for supper with some friends of theirs. They had a young child visiting them who was not happy because her parents had been in Europe for about a month. She got a splinter in her foot in the middle of dinner and could not be consoled.

Finally I thought I saw an opportunity and I reached in my pocket and I said, "I am going to show you something special. I pulled out my badge and the crying stopped, the tears stopped, she began to smile. And our hostess said, "Honey, do you know what that is?" And she said, "Yes, the Salvation Army."

(Laughter and applause.)

Well, for about five months, before my family could

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join me, I had to stay in the Mayflower Hotel in the suite that former Attorney General Ed Levy had occupied. It is at the far end of that long corridor. One evening during the convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution I was leaving to go out to dinner, and I was confronted by about four obviously high ranking officials marching down that corridor toward me, filling the whole space with sashes and medals. Just as we met, I didn't know who was going to break the ice, and the obviously senior person looked at me and said, "What's a nice man like you doing in a place like this?"

(Laughter.)

More humility.

I am going to tell you a story that has never been told before for reasons you will understand. When I was returning from some distant city during a very snowy time in Washington, early on, I was met by an FBI driver late at night, and we went out together. He said, "I have put the car out in front. You should have no trouble." What he didn't tell me, and probably didn't know, is that he had put it in a no parking zone. When we arrived there, there was no car.

(Laughter.)

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Well, it was late, it was snowing. But nevertheless, I want you to know, with typical FBI ingenuity, we did recover that automobile. Our hostage negotiating skills were unsurpassed. No arms were traded, no ransom was supplied.

(Laughter.)

And furthermore, for nine years there has been not one leak about that event.

(Laughter and applause.)

I told the agent that was a non-happening and he believed me.

When I got here I thought maybe there was a little too much rhetoric out there that we needed to trim. So I passed around word, that I wanted people to take some responsibility for what they were recommending to me and that I wasn't particularly turned on by the word feel, that I thought the government paid for our opinions, our conclusions, what we thought, and I asked that if they would try to get away from, especially, the term "it is felt that".

Well, tonight I think it is okay to feel. And I feel very strongly and gratefully about your presence here tonight.

There are some faces here in the audience--some who

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were here nine years ago, when I was sworn in, and from many chapters in my life--that remind me of shared events, and of friendship, and of loyalty, and yes, of love. And so it is okay to feel.

I am grateful that Clarence Kelly is here tonight. A man of uncommon decency who came down on the side of quality investigations and who set basic priorities and placed the Bureau on a course that we have followed with earnestness and with pride.

The Peggy Devine, whom all of you have come to know in your conversations with me and messages with me and tours you wanted for your friends and other things you needed, was waiting for me when I walked in the door, on February 23, 1978. She has been an absolutely indispensable member of my team. She elected to come to the CIA after over 30 years of exceptional service to the Bureau. And how glad I am that she was ready for a new adventure. I'd like to take a moment to ask Peggy Devine to stand so that all of us can thank her for what she has done.

(Applause.)

Peggy, in a very real way this party is just as much a party for you as it is for me because it would not

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have been possible without you.

These have been very exciting years for me. I have been exposed to all kinds of new things. This has been a rapidly changing period in law enforcement. It has been fun to be on the cutting edge of much scientific change, some of which you saw tonight.

The use of lasers: we can now fingerprint the inside of a glove. Computers: with all of the implications they mean to us in terms of important data files; in terms of computerized fingerprints; in terms of artificial intelligence, now well on its way.

The advances in serology, the exceptional results in our behavioral science division in concert with other members of law enforcement components, and something that has been very dear to my heart. With the help of the Department we are now making serious inroads in developing less than lethal weaponry.

We have watched big challenges, more than I have time to talk about. But we have watched and seen that it was possible to use sensitive techniques where needed and where customary techniques would not avail in some of the most important programs of the FBI.



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We have used informants and electronic surveillance and undercover programs against the major organized crime activities in this country, the major narcotics programs. We have used them in our white collar program against public corruption. And you saw some of those tonight. We have used them against terrorism in this country and kept it low. And we have used it significantly in our counterintelligence efforts to protect this country from hostile intelligence gathering.

It gives me great pride in all the men and women of the Bureau that we have used these sensitive techniques boldly, but lawfully, and under guidelines laid down by the Attorney General and under the oversight of our Congressional committees.

Most of all, I am pleased with the level of cooperation we have seen between law enforcement agencies, both federal, state and local, that I do not think existed as well nine years ago. I am proud of our FBI, that it participated as a full partner in elevating that level of cooperation, producing a degree of professionalism in law enforcement unknown in previous years.

I have watched the FBI grow in terms of interna-

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tional responsibilities, and I was counting up today that, in the course of those responsibilities, both in terms of terrorism and narcotics and the National Academy programs abroad and Interpol and the United Nations efforts against crime, I have visited sixteen countries all around the world. And I have had the privilege of visiting 58 of the 59 field divisions of the FBI. I only missed one and wouldn't you know, it was Butte, Montana.

(Laughter.)

And everywhere I have been I have found respect and admiration and friendship and a high regard for the professional standards the men and women, in the field, in the FBI, were producing. These have been years of momentous events, some of which were on the film tonight. Emotional events: the assassination of Judge John Wood, the first federal judge to be assassinated in this century; the shooting of President Reagan; and the investigation under the new presidential assassination statute.

On the good side, the six years of preparation for the Olympics in Los Angeles that went so smoothly. And the wonderful celebration in New York harbor last year that would not have been as smooth but for the years of preparation by

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law enforcement components at both the state and federal level. The seventy-fifth anniversary, with the President here, and Jimmy Stewart, were great moments.

We have had our moments of anguish--Bill Baker referred to some of them--most forcefully brought home. And some of the funerals and memorial services I have attended in El Centro, Seattle, Centralia, Chicago, Miami, Charleston, West Virginia, and Quantico, reminding us of the costs we pay. I must mention one here in Washington, three years ago, when this FBI family rallied around my own family in time of need.

We have had a roller coaster of emotions and challenges and opportunities. But throughout there was one unwavering constant theme: fidelity, bravery, integrity.

Tonight you have given me a chance to say thank you, to say how much I value your friendships, to say that nothing in career changes, changes this. I have joined a new team, a team equally dedicated to (tape changed to side 2) value your friendships, to say that nothing in career changes changes this. I've joined a new team, a team dedicated to service to our country, a team of decent, honorable, able men and women, with a warm and cordial working relationship with

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the FBI. Knowing that I have your goodwill means everything to me. It has sustained me all these years and has made public service, not a burden, but a very real joy and privilege.

Tomorrow I will be back on duty with my eyes firmly fixed on the present and the future. But tonight you have allowed me to think warmly about our shared experiences and our friendships and reflect that, because of them, and because of you, I have been truly blessed. Thank you.

(Applause.)